



Testimony of Ashley Zane
Government Affairs Associate, CBIA
Before the Environment Committee
Hartford, CT
February 25, 2022

Testifying in opposition of:

SB 115: AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PACKAGING.

My name is Ashley Zane and I am a Government Affairs Associate for CBIA, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA is Connecticut's largest business organization, with thousands of member companies, small and large, representing a diverse range of industries from across the state. Ninety-five percent of our member companies employ 100 or fewer workers.

I am here in opposition to SB 115, An Act Concerning Extended Producer Responsibility for Consumer Packaging. CBIA has a series of concerns regarding this bill including increased costs to consumers and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protections capacity to operate the program.

This bill will lead to increased costs to consumers and disproportionately impact lower income households across the state. The cost to collect and process recycling has increased by 700% which is absorbed by the consumer when purchasing items¹. If the cost of packaged goods increases by only 6%, this results in an increase of over \$700 per year for an average household family of four². When this is extrapolated to the state, this leads to an increased cost of over \$840 million to Connecticut households³. Additionally, studies have shown that lower income households purchase 20% more packaged goods⁴.

Many advocates claim that this program will lead to decreased costs to municipalities which will then free up resources to provide other valuable services to the community. 100 of the 169 municipalities in the state do not pay for the cost of recycling⁵. These towns contract with private haulers who are paid for by the residents. For municipalities that do cover the cost of recycling, these programmatic costs are offset by taxpayers and

1-5. Task Force to Study Methods for Reducing Consumer Packaging that Generates Solid Waste, Recommendations, https://www.cga.ct.gov/env/tfs/20170216_Task%20Force%20to%20Study%20Methods%20for%20Reducing%20Consumer%20Packaging%20that%20Generates%20Solid%20Waste/Final%20Report/Task%20Force%20to%20Study%20Methods%20for%20Reducing%20Consumer%20Packaging%20that%20Generates%20Solid%20Waste%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf

revenues from materials such as PPP that are sold to the market. Connecticut is a top five state in the country and private haulers and materials recovery facilities have invested millions of their own dollars on the best equipment and technology to accomplish this goal. They have created countless jobs and contributed to the state's economic health as well as the state's ecological health.

Finally, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protections is responsible for many programs and that list has grown in recent years. A few of these extensive programs and projects include:

- Assuming regulatory responsibilities for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission responsible for regulating and licensing byproduct materials (radioisotopes), source materials (uranium and thorium), and certain amounts of special nuclear materials.
- Transitioning the state from a Transfer Act system to a Release Based Reporting system which will likely lead to an increase in spill reporting and work for the Department.
- Monitoring new source separation programs at the local level.
- DEEP will also play an important part in the comprehensive and in-depth infrastructure plan using millions of federal funding.
- Updating and creating an electronic file room for record searches.

While these are only some of the programs, DEEP is also experiencing a significant staffing and resource issue due to retirements. Not only is the Department losing staff, but they are also losing individuals with significant institutional knowledge. CBIA does not think that adding three new extended producer responsibility programs at this time would enable DEEP to maximize their resources and continue to provide high quality services. As it stands, there is still a backlog of permits waiting for approval or permits that have taken years to process.

CBIA supports the goal of creating a more sustainable and cleaner Connecticut but increasing costs and adding another program to DEEP's bandwidth is not a policy we can support. I urge the committee to reject this proposal and please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you may have.